

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

STUDENT GUIDE
PSA Mentoring Service

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WHAT IS A PSA?

To become a registered architect in the UK, you will need to complete Parts 1, 2 and 3 before applying to be on the ARB register of Architects. The ARB set the criteria for this process and state that all Part 3 candidates demonstrate that they have completed 24 months practical experience. ARB extract:

'...a minimum of 24 months' practical experience under the direct supervision of a professional working in the construction industry which should include at least 12 months working in a Relevant European Territory, under the direct supervision of an architect.'

A Professional Studies Adviser (PSA) is someone who has responsibility for monitoring graduates who are undertaking PPE (Professional Practical Experience), both post Part 1 and post Part 2.

They are often also responsible for the teaching of Professional Studies within the schools of architecture and are involved in the research of matters related to professional education.

At the Manchester School of Architecture, all our PSA's are qualified architects and many practice architecture at the same time as teaching and mentoring students in practice.

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL MENTOR?

Professional Mentors are responsible for the direct supervision of the student undertaking PPE as part of their Stage 1 (Part 1), or Stage 2 (Part 2) experience, in practice.

Typically, a Professional Mentor will support and prepare the student in advance of their Part 2 or Part 3 qualifications, leading to the ARB Professional Interview which is the gateway to registration as an Architect in the UK.

All students must be supervised by a mentor during their practical experience. 'Direct supervision' is defined by the ARB as having 'control over and take responsibility for the work being undertaken.

Typically, the student and the supervisor (mentor) will be employed by the same organisation but where the relationship is not typical, they will need to satisfy their Professional Studies Adviser (PSA) that the level and type of supervision is appropriate.

The MSA have a guidance document for Professional Mentors, please email r.newton@mmu.ac.uk to request a copy.

HOW DOES THE PEDR PROCESS WORK?

As a RIBA Part 1 or Part 2 student starting a period of employment in practice, it is important that you get into the habit of keeping a record of everything you as soon as possible, while the information is fresh in your mind. Regardless of whether you intend to progress to Part 3, or not.

The process of self-reflective practice should form a habitual part of your daily/weekly routine and is instrumental in ensuring success in the later stages of architectural education, or indeed, in careers outside of the profession.

We advise you to record your experience using the [RIBA's PEDR system](#).

In accordance with this process, you will record your experience by inputting the relevant data into the PEDR form, comprising a description of tasks completed, skills gained and a critical reflection of the practical experience.

A note about the importance of recording your experience, in the moment...

As a Part 1 or Part 2 student, the PEDR process is a tool for you to use, to remain in control of your time spent in professional practice; to understand and be aware of the breadth and depth of experience you are getting. If you have followed the process as it is intended, completing the record forms every quarter, you can use your reflections as a mechanism to inform discussions with your PSA and Office Mentor about where the gaps in your experience lie. This will then support any further action you need to take to widen/deepen that experience well in advance of Part 3.

If you neglect to record the experience at the time it occurs, your reflections will be retrospective, and will lack the quality and honesty that adds value and drives you to take positive action to aid your progression as a professional.

It is possible to record experience retrospectively – all experience is valid; however, it is highly recommended by MSA, ARB Professional Examiners and RIBA, that best practice is to record your PPE 'in the moment', using the record as a tool for development. It is your responsibility to ensure you meet the ARB criteria via your Practical Experience during your employment. As a professional, you need to establish pro-active ways of working to enable your progression.

HOW CAN I GET A PSA?

The MSA [PSA Mentoring Service](#) is £40 per quarter. Once signed up, you will receive an email introducing you to your PSA. Following this, it is your responsibility to liaise directly with your Advisor and arrange a meeting to discuss the relevant period(s) of experience.

The initial PSA meeting will be conducted either in person or via Teams (depending on yours and your PSA's requirements). Lasting approximately 30 minutes, the initial meeting is an opportunity for you to talk openly to your PSA about your time in practice.

You will then complete the PEDR over the duration of the quarter. Once completed, you will submit the form electronically to your Professional Mentor. You can use the quarterly record as a basis for your Mentor meeting, which should occur once every 2 months (minimum). Your Professional Mentor will then be required to review and approve this online, following completion of a short appraisal with them to offer feedback and plan for the next quarter. The next step is to submit the form to your PSA, who will add their comments, prior to holding a final meeting with you (30mins – 1hour), to talk through their feedback and suggest any CPD strategies to help support your professional development.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF PEDR'S?

When, and if, you are ready to take your RIBA Part 3, you will be asked to demonstrate that you will have the required level of PPE, prior to starting the programme. In accordance with ARB criteria, you need to have:

'...a minimum of 24 months' practical experience under the direct supervision of a professional working in the construction industry which should include at least 12 months working in a Relevant European Territory, under the direct supervision of an architect.'

The PEDR process is one of the most effective, industry-recognised ways of providing this evidence at Part 3. Professional Examiners will read over PEDR's, including the comments made by mentors and PSAs (from as early as your Stage 1 experience). Therefore, we encourage PEDR's to be completed accurately, and honestly. PEDR's enable the Examiners to assess your overall level of competence and experience, prior to awarding Part 3. We encourage PSA's and mentors to provide constructive and evaluative feedback for the student to support the process.

If you decide not to do your Part 3, the PEDR process is still valuable and helpful, enabling you to develop transferrable skills in critically reflecting on your practice, and tracking your experience. The ability to evaluate and drive your own personal development demonstrates acute self-awareness, which is a valuable life skill.

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

[Sign up to the MSA PSA Service here](#)

Email for support with PSA Service: msa-psadvisor@mmu.ac.uk

For information about Part 3 at MSA, Contact Rachel Newton, Programme Leader PgCert Architecture and Contemporary Practice (RIBA Part 3)

r.newton@mmu.ac.uk

[Register with RIBA PEDR System here](#)

[Download the RIBA PEDR guide for students](#)